

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-14 are presently active in this case. Claims 1, 5, 10, and 13 have been amended by way of the present amendment. The amendment to claim 10 is intended to correct a typographical error made in the August 29, 2003 amendment. The August 29, 2003 amendment reflects that claim 10 is "Original" (which it is) and that it depends from claim 3 (which is incorrect). Claim 10 depends from claim 1.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph for failing to comply with the written description requirement; Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite; Claims 1-5, 8, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,329,694 to Lee et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,843,813 to Wei et al.; Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. in view of Wei et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,384,455 to Nishigohri; Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al. in view of Wei et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,066,520 to Suzuki; and Claims 13 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,519,243 to Kikuda et al. in view of Suzuki.

Claim 10 was objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. However, because Applicants believe themselves entitled to the scope of protection defined by independent Claim 1, Claim 10 has presently been maintained in dependent form.

In response to the rejection of Claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, independent Claims 1, 5, and 13 have been amended to clarify that the first and second wells are formed

adjacent to each other. Consequently, Applicants submit that the limitation defined in claims 1, 5, and 13 that the first conductive layer (conductive layer in claim 13) across the first well and the second well with an end provided on the first well and another end provided on the second well is clear, definite, and supported by the specification. If the examiner disagrees, he is invited to contact the undersigned in order to select language that is acceptable.

Regarding the rejection of claims 1, 5, and 13 under 35 USC 103(a), Applicants point out that in Lee et al., the p + guard ring 106 has a different conductivity type from that of the n-wells. In the event conductivity type of the first conductive layer is different from that of the first and second wells, 91 and 101. In the present invention, on the other hand, the first conductive layer has the same conductivity type as the prescribed conductivity of the first and second wells for electrically connecting the first and second wells. Consequently, electrical connection cannot be established due to a PN junction. Conversely, in Lee et al., it is required that the conductivity type of the p + guard ring be different from that of the n-wells 91 and 101 since electrical connection between the n-wells 91 and 101 established by the p + guard ring 106 would affect the device operation. Further, none of the applied secondary references are believed to remedy the deficiency of Lee et al. Consequently, Lee et al. are not believed to anticipate or render obvious the subject matter defined by claims 1, 5, or 13.

Regarding dependent claim 6, Applicants submit that Suzuki merely discloses in Fig. 1G a structure where a silicide layer 125 is formed on a source/drain layer 123, and fails to disclose that “the impurity introduction layer has the same conductivity type as that of the first and second wells.” Hence, Lee et al. are not believed to anticipate or render obvious the subject matter defined by claim 6.

Dependent Claims 2-4, 7-12, 14, and 15 are believed to be allowable for at least the same reasons as Claims 1, 5, 6, and 13.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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